

FR350
Russian Literature and Culture in Translation:
Investigations of the Russian Mind, Soul and Identity through 19th and 20th Century
Literature, Music and Film

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Course Description

This course offers a survey of major historical themes in Russian literature and culture, which to this day impact the way in which Russians behave and think about themselves and their lives. Some concepts which have remained a focus of Russians' lives since the 19th century and before include the concept of the individual, gender, spirituality, soul (dusha), victimization and Russian identity. Understanding these and other concepts leads to a better understanding of how Russians think and behave politically, in business and in their daily lives. Via a study of these concepts in literature, music and film, concepts mentioned above and questions of the responsibility of the individual to himself to the social collective and to the world are illuminated. This course takes as its starting point selections of 19th century literature and moves to the 20th century to discuss current themes which permeate not only literature and art, but society as a whole and are important to understanding Russian culture, society and politics.

Requirements

- *Timely completion reading and writing assignments and full participation in class: 25%
- * Weekly journal entry: graded on depth and usefulness for discussion in class: 25%
- * 2-3 papers: 25%
- * Final project: 25%

General Outline and List of Works to be Read and/or Studied:

Week 1

19th century investigation of the Russian Soul

8/22

Introduction to the course (including 5 minute film excerpt)

Lecture: The Underdog in 19th c. Russian Literature

Hw: Read Gogol's *The Overcoat*

8/24

Lecture on Gogol

Discussion of text

Hw: Read Gogol's *The Overcoat*

8/26

Excerpt: "Gogol" in "Introduction to Russian Literature"

Final discussion of text

Hw: journaling

Week 2

8/29

Russian Film: An Introduction

Hw: Begin paper

8/31

Film: "The Overcoat"

Hw: Short paper on Gogol

9/2

Film: "The Overcoat"

Hw: Read *The Nose*

Week 3

9/5: Labor Day

9/7:

Discussion of *The Nose* as an Existentialist piece

Hw: finish *The Nose*

9/9

Excerpt from Billington film: Russian Culture

Hw: Journal entry

Week 4

9/12

Excerpt "Dostoevsky"

Introduction to Dostoevsky

Hw: read *Notes from the Underground* pp.3-20

9/14

Discussion of text

Hw: *Notes* pp. 20-41

9/16

Preparation for independent projects

Overview of USNA library resources

Hw: *Notes* pp. 42-70, select project topic

Week 5

9/19

Preliminary Presentation of project topics

Discussion of text

Hw: *Notes* pp.71-98

9/21

Discussion

Hw: *Notes* pp.99-end; prepare outline of project

9/23

Introduction to Lev Tolstoy

Begin film on Tolstoy

Hw: Paper on Dostoevsky

Week 6

9/26

Film: Tolstoy

Hand in paper and be prepared to discuss

Hw: *The Death of Ivan Ilych*

9/28

Film: Tolstoy

Discussion of text

Hw: *the Death...*

10/30 no class

journaling

Week 7

10/3

Final presentations of project choices, including outline

Discussion of text and journal entries

Hw: *The Death*

10/5

Film: "The Death..."

Hw: Finish *The Death...*

10/7

Film: "The Death..."

journaling: essay on *the Death*

Week 8

10/10

Columbus Day

10/12

Eisenstein: "Ten Days that Shook the World"

Hw: Mayakovsky's *The Bedbug*

10/14

Eisenstein: "Ten Days that Shook the World"

Hw: journal entry

Week 9

10/17

Discussion of Mayakovsky

Hw: *The Bedbug*

10/19

Guest Speaker on Soviet history, Dr. Tom Sanders.

Hw: *The Bedbug*

10/21

Final discussion of Mayakovsky

Update on projects

Hw: Paper on *The Bedbug*

Week 10

10/24

Sampling Soviet Poetry: Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Mandelstam

Hw: Begin Zamyatin's *We*

10/26

Introduction to Zamyatin

Hw: *We*

10/28

Discussion of Zamyatin

Hw: Journal entry

Week 11

10/31

"Magnitogorsk"

Hw: *We*

11/2

"Magnitogorsk" and Discussion of *We*

11/4

Music during the Soviet period

Hw: Paper on *We*

Week 12

11/7

Discussion of Papers; project outlines due

Film week: “The Inner Circle” or “I was Stalin’s Bodyguard”

Hw: work on final projects

Week 13

11/14

Excerpt: “Solzhenitsyn”

Introduction to *One Day*

Who is the underdog now?

Hw: *One Day*...

11/16

Discussion

Hw: *One Day*

11/18

“Utopia and Dystopia”: Guest Speaker

Hw: Journal Entry

Week 14

The First Circle Film

Hw: *One Day*

Thanksgiving break

Week 15

11/28

Solzhenitsyn’s “First Circle”-to end.

11/30 and 12/2

Project presentations #1-3

Week 16

Presentations:

12/6 #4-7

12/8 #8-10